

The Revolt of the Silversmiths of Ephesus



A short study in history—
ancient and modern—related
to the U. F. O. and I. L. P.
movement in Ontario. : :



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There is a saying to the effect that "History repeats itself."

That saying no doubt rests on the observation that many times, in the course of centuries, there will re-appear in the records of activities of peoples, widely separated it may be by distance of space as well as of time, many of the same general principles of character and of spirit in action.

It is interesting to note in that connection, and to read to-day, the story of the riot in the ancient city of Ephesus, which was engineered near two thousand years ago by the manufacturing silversmiths and merchant traders in silver shrines of that city, who rose in revolt against new ideas and conceptions of moral and spiritual truth, affecting social and industrial relations. These new ideas were developed by the great Nazarene teacher of Galilee, and the energetic propaganda of a converted tentmaker of Tarsus had spread them rapidly through Asia Minor and through the Greek cities of the Mediterranean.

That teaching of the Nazarene, interpreted by his ardent converts from Tarsus, was very revolutionary teaching. It was revolutionary teaching of very disturbing quality, as is in evidence in records of what took place in almost every synagogue, in every market place, and on the country hillsides, wherever its apostles told their story.

That teaching called for a radical reconstruction of all the then current ideas on social and industrial relations, and of the political economy of the state. In the case of all territory tributary to the commercial city of Ephesus, the propaganda of Saul of Tarsus challenged the religious beliefs of the time; particularly those of the worshippers who came to Ephesus to pay tribute at the temple of the many breasted Diana (or Artemis), and it seriously threatened the economic and financial interests of a great local industry in the manufacture of silver shrines.

There can be no doubt at all that the activities of this converted tentmaker, as an interpreter of the teaching of the Nazarene, undermined the authority of the ideas of the ruling classes of the day, and tended to undermine and destroy the confidence of the masses of the people in the value of the traditional teaching if their priests and social leaders. That new teaching, however, won out in its appeal to the reason and experience of

the common people. It certainly was "revolutionary" teaching and propaganda, which Saul of Tarsus carried on with great activity in the commercial city of Ephesus in Asia Minor 2,000 years ago.

Our special interest to-day in this story of the riot of the silversmiths of Ephesus lies in the present day attitude of manufacturers and merchant traders of the 20th century towards propagandists of new moral and spiritual interpretations of truth of a revolutionary character, which calls for a radical reconstruction on the American continent, and in Canada, of traditional social and industrial relations and of political economy, particularly such reconstruction as challenges the economic interests of traders and employers of labor.

It is quite clear to see that Demetrius and his fellow silversmiths, cared nothing at all about the moral and spiritual issues in the teaching against which they rose in protest. The motive in their revolt and the controlling force behind their action, was the thought of loss, and economic disturbance to their class interests.

It is evident, from the records, that the population of Asia Minor and of the City of Ephesus could go to hell and perdition, so far as the silversmiths were concerned, if those people would only "shunt" Saul and his teaching out of Ephesus and let the old gang rule.

Here we note the application of the saying that "History repeats itself."

It is worthy of note that it was not the priests of the temple at Ephesus who led the revolt against Saul, but the manufacturers and merchant traders, led the revolt against the new ideas and moral teachings of the convert of the Nazarene.

It is still more worthy of note, that while the manufacture of silver shrines soon ceased to be the great industry of Ephesus, the moral and spiritual issues raised in the propaganda of the Nazarene and his ardent convert, are to-day, in the 20th century, the revolutionary inspiration still of social, industrial and political unrest on the American continent, and in the Dominion of Canada, as truly as was the situation in Ephesus 2,000 years ago. There is every indication that the same result will follow for the traditional ideas and practice of our manufacturers in revolt to-day, and that the final supremacy of the revolutionary demands of moral and spiritual law, over the current legal code which governs the relations of employers to employees

in the industrial activities of both Europe and America, is, without a shadow of a doubt, destined to be realized.

Turning now to current events:—

It was my privilege and pleasure on a recent date to address the "Open Forum" of the Independent Labor Party and U. F. O. Club of St. Thomas on "The Moral Law and the Legal Code" in relation to the activities of the Independent Labor Party of Ontario.

The points made in my address seem to have reached a vital spot in the social anatomy and political economy of local silversmiths back of the St. Thomas "Times Journal."

We tried to show how the U. F. O. and the I. L. P. met a social demand, and were born of the desire of our citizens for a higher grade and a finer quality of moral sense in the legal code of Ontario and of Canada.

We affirmed that the I. L. P. expressed the demand of the working class of Ontario for effective recognition, in constitutional law, of certain natural rights of the working class which up to date have been disregarded by employers of labor in practice, and by legislators in their manufacture of the legal code.

It was shown that the moral law existed before any legal code was manufactured; and that the moral law never changes, while the legal code is always changing and will continue to change, with a clearer recognition of moral obligations; as experience and education increase our knowledge of the moral law on which any legal code rests. Attention was called to the existence in Ontario of class distinctions created by a legal code which is out of harmony with moral law. It was pointed out that neither the I. L. P. or the U. F. O. had created these class distinctions. We found them ready made for us. We declare them to be the offensive product of ancient errors endorsed and kept alive by corrupt Capitalist politicians. We quite readily admit, however, that we focus a searchlight on these class distinctions, and it is our duty to work for the elimination from the legal code of those fictions on which these distinctions rest.

The political silversmiths back of the St. Thomas "Times-Journal" worked up a state of unrest over this address, a lengthy synopsis of which it published. Following the lead of an editorial criticism, two staff writers on the following Saturday devoted a column each to

critical reviews of the address, viz.: "Malcolm" in the "Inglebrook," and "Onlooker" from the "Owl's Corner."

My editorial critic affirmed that the proper method of approach to the industrial problem is by the way of brotherhood. I quite agree to that, and approached my subject on such lines, so that I do not see the force of the editorial suggestion in this particular case. The I. L. P., however, is entitled to know, from the "Times-Journal," a definition of the type of brotherhood it selects, because so much depends upon the type selected. There is the Cain and Abel type; the Jacob and Esau type, the prodigal son and envious brother type; and sundry others which we know something about and do not appreciate. I believe that I may say on behalf of the I. L. P. that it is not satisfied with that brand of brotherhood so much in vogue with a large group in the Christian Church, willing to sell the working class a mess of pottage in exchange for a birthright of far greater value.

My reference to the existence of a rigid class distinction in Canada between employer and employee in industry, which is a well-defined class distinction endorsed by the legal code, but not recognized in moral law, seems to be the root of the trouble with the "Times-Journal" and the special cause of its unrest. My recognition of that distinction as an existing fact also seems to have been my offence in the eye of both "Malcolm" and "Onlooker." "Malcolm," writing from the "Inglebrook," asserts that "we Canadians all belong to the working class." I did not say anything to the contrary, so what is the trouble? Is it a case of a troubled conscience? "Malcolm" is wise enough not to say that we all belong to the employing class, which would be more to the point, as that was the distinction drawn. "Malcolm" asserts also that in Canada our civilization has not yet evolved a privileged class." From the "Owl's Corner," "Onlooker" affirms that "in St. Thomas where class distinctions between employer and employee do not exist, Ashplant is on dangerous ground."

Citizens of St. Thomas no doubt fully realize that such assertions are just so much journalistic "tommyrot." As a simple matter of fact, and without prejudice, our employers of labor in Canada are a privileged class, and in the City of St. Thomas this class distinction does exist, and is as manifest in its social and industrial or-

ganization as it is in that of every other city, town or village in Ontario.

The St. Thomas "Times-Journal" editorially asserts that "the basic interests of employers and employees are identical." That is only an exhibit of economic illiteracy, and illiteracy is a dangerous thing to-day, as Frank D. Vanderlip, an American financier, recently noted on his return from Europe; when he took occasion to refer to the "Economic illiteracy of the American businessman." Again, as a simple matter of fact and without prejudice, it is easy to prove that these interests of employer and employee are as identical only as the two sides to a "Profit and Loss" account.

Every economist knows, or ought to know, that when a salaried employee is credited with 1,000 dollars less than he earns, that the profit account will be credited with that 1,000 dollars more than it would be if that 1,000 dollars had been charged to wages account, as it ought to have been, and credited to the salaried employee. The legal code in Canada as in Europe recognizes the right of an employer to receive credit for all the unearned increment which accrues to the sale of an employee's product, and to use it as his personal and private property. That is not in accord with moral law, and to-day we know that social peace and political stability depend on obedience to the dictate of moral law. We know to-day that the root cause of social, industrial, and political unrest is found in the attempt to make legally right that which is morally wrong in the relations between employers of labor and their employees. And we know, even if the silversmiths behind the "St. Thomas Times-Journal" have not yet learned that vital truth in State economy, that it is just because the economic interests of these two classes in industry are not identical, as they ought to be, and can be made to be, that we are up against the problems which disturb our peace.

In the departments of exchange and mercantile practice we reap the harvest of confusion born of economic illiteracy, even if it be sown in ignorance of the moral law.

When we talk of a department and Minister of Justice, we would be more correct to speak of the department and Minister of Legality, because in Canada, it is not that which is Just but that which is Legal, which the

courts decide, and which determines the policy of employers to employees. It is statutory law, not moral law, which governs industry in Ontario, and in St. Thomas, as it does in Europe, and that is why I chose to call attention to the effort of the I. L. P. and U. F. O. to make the legal code conform to moral law in the best interest of all parties in industry and the political State.

The moral law is not an artificial thing of man's manufacture like the legal code, but it is a natural element which existed before the legal code; and being a natural element the moral law will, in the nature of the economy of the universe, reappear and assert its supremacy in all ages, and in any country, in spite of all efforts of silversmiths or of economic ignorance and illiteracy to suppress it. It is that natural revolt of the moral sense in humanity which explains the birth of the I. L. P. and of the U. F. O. in the political arena of Ontario, and also explains our industrial unrest. It is one of the forms in which "History repeats itself."

I desire, in conclusion, to deal as briefly as I can with "Malcolm's" effort to ridicule my statement regarding the payment of wages to the working class in America in counterfeit money, which is not what it pretends to be. Notice our definition of counterfeit money, as being that currency paid to the working class, which is not as it pretends to be, viz., the equivalent of gold metal. That point is on the same level as the matter of class distinctions. We do not create the situation to which we call attention. We find the situation created ready made for our treatment, and we simply focus our searchlights on it, and propose to do that fearlessly.

Reading carefully what "Malcolm" has had to say in the St. Thomas "Times-Journal" about currency and wages, I notice that he does not deny that what I said is true, he merely tries to poke fun at my position. I desire to confirm all that I said in my address about our currency, and to reaffirm it. What is counterfeit money anyway? And how does it work out? I am referring now to the currency paid as wages to the working class on the American continent.

Notice first:

- (1) It is not gold metal, nor is it equivalent to gold.
- (2) It is a tool used in the process of exchange.
- (3) The function, or part played by that tool, is to

secure something of value given in exchange for it by the working class producers, from either farm or factory, without giving an equivalent, value for value.

(4) Those who issue counterfeit money, for circulation, secure goods, or services, which are products of labor, without exerting equivalent labor to produce that money which they give, in exchange, for the products they secure.

The actual producer of such goods or service so secured in exchange for counterfeit money, by any person or corporation, loses the product of his labor in such proportion as he receives less value than he gives. The very essence of the interest any counterfeiter has in his vocation, is to enjoy the fruits of labor without expending labor in equivalent volume needed to produce the goods he secures.

He gets something for nothing.

I make the definite statement, as a matter of fact, without prejudice, that on the American continent, that that is the nature of the tool, or medium of exchange, which is issued as currency by financiers to employers of labor for the payment of wages, in exchange for goods, and services, produced by the employed class in every form of industry. There is nothing wild, or declamatory, in that statement. It is a cool, calculated statement of fact without prejudice, supported by facts capable of demonstration and proof. What has "Malcolm" to say to that?

Personally I am quite satisfied that the average employer of labor in Ontario has not the faintest idea of the facts. In regard to the tool or medium of exchange he is on the average an economic illiterate, as also is his employee. Both groups need the guiding light of truth.

There may be, however, a big difference between that which the St. Thomas "Times-Journal" wants and what it needs.

Copies of this pamphlet can be obtained from the author at 5c each, \$3.00 per hundred.

Copies of "Market Price of Wheat" and "Market Price of Gold," \$1.00 per hundred.